

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks. For the Examiner's convenience and reference, Applicant's remarks are presented in substantially the same order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-30 are pending. Claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29 and 30 are currently amended to more clearly define pre-existing claim limitations. Claims 2, 9, 16, 20, 24, and 28 are canceled. No claims are added. No new matter has been added.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 2-7, 9-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24-26 and 28-30 stand objected to as depending from a rejected independent claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all intervening claim limitations.

Claims 1, 8, 15 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,279,058 to Gulick et al. (hereinafter "Gulick")

Claims 23 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gulick in view of what is well known in the art, as exemplified by Canova, Jr. et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,906,741 (hereinafter "Canova").

Response to Objections

The drawings stand objected to because numbers and reference characters are not plain and legible in Figures 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, and 5. In particular, the Office Action states that numbers and reference characters are not plain and legible in Figures 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, and 5. Applicant respectfully submits that Figures 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, and 5 have been resubmitted by Replacement Sheets as suggested by the Examiner. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's recommendation and respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

The specification stands objected to because of informalities. In particular, the Office Action states that the specification must identify any related application/patents by

the serial number (not by the Attorney's Docket number and any other number) or patent number, if patented. Applicant respectfully submits that the specification has been amended to identify the related applications by the serial number, as suggested by the Examiner. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's recommendation and respectfully requests that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Response to Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 8, 15 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gulick. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections because the cited reference fails to disclose all of the limitations of the claims.

Claims 1, 8, 15, and 19, have been amended to include the limitations of claims 2, 9, 16, and 20, respectively, which have been indicated by the examiner as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 8, 15, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Given that claims 3-7, 10-14, and 17-18, and 21-22 depend from independent claims 1, 8, 15, and 19, which are patentable over the cited reference, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 3-7, 10-14, and 17-18, and 21-22 are also patentable over the cited reference. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 3-7, 10-14, and 17-18, and 21-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Response to Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected claims 23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gulick in view of what was well known in the art, as exemplified by Canova. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of these rejections because the combination of cited references fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the claims.

Claims 23 and 27 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 24 and 28, respectively, which have been indicated by the examiner as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit the withdrawal of the rejections of claims 23 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Given that claims 25-26 and 29-30 depend from independent claims 23 and 27, which are patentable over the cited reference, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 25-26 and 29-30 are also patentable over the cited reference. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection of claims 25-26 and 29-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

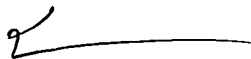
It is respectfully submitted that in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the rejections and objections have been overcome. If the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Michael J. Mallie at (408) 720-8300.

If there are any additional charges, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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